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TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE 010835Z OCT 72 VIA CAS CHANNELS (BUNKER)
FROM: AL HAIG SAIGON 0170 IMMEDIATE
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, HENRY A. KISSINGER
HAIGTO-4-B

SPENT PERIOD FROM 8:30 ARRIVAL UNTIL NOON WITH AMBASSADOR BUNKER REVIEWING IN DETAIL PROPOSED DISCUSSION WITH THIEU. HE IS IN COMPLETE ACCORD WITH STRONG PREAMBLE I PROPOSE TO GIVE WITH RESPECT TO THIEU'S ATTITUDE AND YOURS AND PRESIDENT'S VIEW ON ESSENTIALITY OF UNITY BETWEEN US. I THEN PROCEEDED TO REVIEW IN DETAIL, AS I WILL WITH THIEU TOMORROW, THE TWO PROPOSALS. BUNKER IS IN FULL ACCORD WITH THEM AND AGREES WITH OUR ASSESSMENT THAT THE OTHER SIDE HAS MADE A MAJOR CONCESSION WHICH FAR EXCEEDS ANYTHING THEY HAVE OFFERED THUS FAR.

I DISCUSSED WITH HIM THE PROS AND CONS OF ASKING THIEU AT SOME POINT IN THE PROCESS TO AGREE SECRETLY TO STEP DOWN CONTINGENT UPON THIEU'S OWN ASSESSMENT OF WHETHER NECESSARY SECURITY CONDITIONS HAD BEEN MET. BUNKER FEELS THIS CAN BE DONE AT SOME POINT, ALTHOUGH HE AGREES IT WOULD BE TOO MUCH FOR THE TRAFFIC TO BEAR ON THIS TRIP. HE IS MORE SANGUINE THAN CARVER ON ACCEPTABILITY OF THIS ACTION TO GVN BODY POLITIC, INSISTING THAT THIEU HAS COMMITTED HIMSELF PUBLICLY TO YOUR COURSE ON TWO OCCASIONS. SINCE HE HAS ALSO DONE SO WITH US PRIVATELY LAST OCTOBER, BUNKER BELIEVES THAT IF TIMED PROPERLY, SUCH AN ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD NOT CAUSE UNDUE STRAIN HERE. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE RECOGNIZES THAT THE PACKAGE I WILL PRESENT TOMORROW COULD VERY WELL DEVELOP INTO A SERIOUS BLOWUP WITH THIEU. HE IS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE FORMAL RECOGNITION OF THE NLF AS A FORCE IN THE STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES. NEVERTHELESS, BUNKER STRONGLY BELIEVES WE SHOULD PROCEED WITH THE PROPOSAL WITH OR WITHOUT THIEU'S ENDORSEMENT. IN THE EVENT WE ARE FORCED TO DO THIS, HE FAVORS HOLDING WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPTION. AT THE SAME TIME, HE ALSO FAVORS OUR STRESSING THE ADVANTAGES OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OPTION AND MOVING AS FORCEFULLY AS POSSIBLE TO GET THIEU TO ACCEPT IT.

State Dept. review completed

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ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS
 APPLY

I ALSO DISCUSSED WITH BUNKER THE THIRD OPTION OF A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND FOURTH OPTION OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WHICH WOULD SELECT THE PRESIDENT. HE BELIEVES THE LATTER WOULD PROBABLY CAUSE THE GREATEST GAS PAINS FOR THIEU, IN THAT IT WOULD PREJUDGE THE GOVERNMENT'S ULTIMATE STRUCTURE AND WOULD BE INTERPRETED AS A MEANS OF WEAKENING THE OVERALL STRENGTH OF THE PRESIDENCY. NEVERTHELESS, BUNKER WOULD NOT OPPOSE EVEN THIS COURSE SHOULD IT BE NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE A SETTLEMENT BREAKTHROUGH. HE WOULD HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT WE WOULD NOT TABLE THIS OPTION IN SPECIFIC TERMS DURING MY DISCUSSIONS WITH THIEU. HOPEFULLY IT WOULD BE HELD UNTIL LATER IF IT PROVES TO BE THE ONLY COURSE OPEN.

ON BALANCE, BUNKER IS VERY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS THOUGH EXTREMELY GUARDED ABOUT THIEU'S RECEPTIVITY. WITH NO INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CONTRARY FROM YOU, I WILL PROCEED TOMORROW IN ACCORDANCE WITH TOHAIG-10 AND ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN FLEXIBILITY WITHIN THE GENERAL APPROACHES OF PARAGRAPH 5.

I SPENT FROM NOON UNTIL 3:00 P.M. WITH GENERAL WEYAND COVERING ALL OF THE TOPICS WE DISCUSSED PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE. NO UNFORESEEN PROBLEM AREAS AROSE AND I FOUND WEYAND GENERALLY CONFIDENT THAT THE ENEMY IS IN DEEP TROUBLE. HE HAS ASKED FOR AUTHORITY TO UTILIZE B-52S UP TO 19 DEGREES, 15 MINUTES. THIS REQUEST IS BASED ON WHAT APPEARS TO BE A LARGE LOGISTICAL BUILDUP EMANATING FROM THE VINH COMPLEX. THIS BUILDUP IS ANNUAL IN CHARACTER AND COINCIDES WITH THE TRADITIONAL OCTOBER-DECEMBER LOGISTICAL PUSH. WEYAND SAID THAT THUS FAR THE ENEMY IS FAR BEHIND SCHEDULE ON THIS ADDITIONAL EFFORT WHICH IS ESSENTIAL FOR REPLENISHING UNITS IN SOUTHERN II CORPS, III AND IV CORPS. HE ADDED THAT WITHIN THREE WEEKS WE SHOULD KNOW WHETHER OR NOT THE ENEMY WILL BE ABLE TO REPLENISH SUFFICIENTLY TO CONDUCT OFFENSIVE ACTIONS IN THESE CORPS AREAS DURING THE NEXT DRY SEASON. HE NOTES THAT THE ENEMY IS ALREADY WAY BEHIND IN THE INFILTRATION OF MANPOWER FOR III AND IV CORPS. THIS TENDS TO FURTHER SUPPORT HANOI'S STRATEGY FOR EARLY NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. WEYAND BELIEVES THAT WITHIN THREE WEEKS THIS LOGISTICAL FACTOR WILL BE MORE FINITELY ASSESSABLE.

I WILL SAVE MORE DETAILED REPORTING ON DISCUSSIONS WITH WEYAND UNTIL LATER. IN THE INTERIM, YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT BUNKER FOUND NO HOOKERS IN ANYTHING WE PROPOSE ON THE NEGOTIATING SIDE. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT THIEU HAS SCHEDULED A SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING FOR 9:00 A.M. IN THE MORNING AND HAS AGREED TO SEE ME AT 11:00. BUNKER NOTES WITH CONCERN THAT THIS IS A PATTERN WHICH THIEU FOLLOWS ONLY WHEN HE NEEDS SUPPORT FOR A STRONG COURSE OF ACTION. IT IS BUNKER'S VIEW THAT OUR CUSTOMER WILL BE VERY TOUGH.

WARM REGARDS.

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